3: Hockings: E-5 (1962-1963) 1968
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956 783 [2391] womenfolk have bathed, they clean the house thoroughly, sprinkle the floor with fresh, semi-liquid cowdung (in Indian thinking, a purifier), and then bring a clean supply of water into the house in clean pots. Not until these preliminaries have been completed and the house can also be considered pure is the man allowed to go to the cattle shed and bring the new salt into his house for powdering.

783 796 By the time the representatives of each family are ready to leave their houses, therefore, they have done all that they possibly can to insure that their persons, their homes, and their salt are in a ritually pure condition. From this point onward there is no further attempt to increase their purity; instead the men lavish care on making no inauspicious slip in their movements.

796 [824] This is thought to be a joyful ceremony, and the acts done to promote an auspicious atmosphere are many. Strings of hill mango[9] leaves are hung over the doorways of the houses to indicate that an auspicious ceremony is in progress. As the men prepare to leave their houses with the salt, there are careful precautions to insure that the man from the Great [787] House is the first to step outside; it would be an ill-omened lack of deference should anyone else precede him. He goes and stands on the *'hattane*, the village green, but he is careful to face away from the houses. The other men to perform the ceremony then line up behind him; were the leader to look around it would indicate that he was faltering or turning back from the performance of an auspicious ceremony.

Thus when the man from the Great House feels that it is time to start off toward the stream with his followers, he cannot look behind, [787] but he asks if all of them have come. The reply that the men give must always be "Yes"; again, it would mean an ill-omened delay for them to answer otherwise. If the leader suspects that in fact the party is not yet ready to leave, he may pose his question in an indirect fashion, as for example, "We are proceeding." If some men have still to reach the green, the reply will be a half-assent such as, "You can if you want to." A negative answer should never be given. If everyone necessary is present, on the other hand, someone merely says "Yes."

It is important that nobody, even in casual conversation, use phrases such as "it is finished" or "it is completed," from the time they leave their houses until they return to the hamlet again. This too would be most inauspicious. The logic underlying the proscription, according to one old man, is that "we should not limit, finish, or complete our society."

While en route to the stream the party must never stop; nothing must block them in the performance of such a beneficial ceremony. Should they meet any other group of people, the latter must give way; and if the other group is going to an inauspicious ceremony such as a funeral they should hide out of sight of the salt-bearing party. (This is also true of the return home afterwards.) Throughout this journey the man from the Great House must remain in front of everyone else, and when they reach [596] the stream he must dig his pit first. Deference to him is expressed again

4: Rockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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fully with the partner. Some non-vegetarians do make a medicine for infertility from the eye of the crow-pheasant (*Centropus sinensis parroti*).

6.63. Badagas rarely offer *pu:ja* at a local temple nowadays in order to obtain children, but in the last century they often did so. Worship of the phallic *linga* symbol associated with Siva was considered very efficacious, particularly in those rare cases where it happened to be a prehistoric axe-head that had "miraculously appeared" in a field during ploughing. The Badaga ancestress deity Hette was also commonly resorted to for the same reason (Jagor 1876 : 199-200). Today it is usual for a couple with no children to make a pilgrimage to some important temple in the South Indian plains, where they make oaths to various gods, promising them goats, coconuts or idol ornaments once they have satisfied the supplicants' need for a child. It is no light matter for a man in an undivided joint family to take such an oath, because of the rules that it entails: in order to fulfil his promise after the birth of a child, the man must consult his family as to when that can be done. The problem is that (*a*) these oaths are normally fulfilled after a birth, but only on a festival day if they were taken in a *Badaga* temple: (*b*) they must not be fulfilled while *any* woman in the joint family is pregnant ; and yet (*c*) they must be fulfiled within twelve years of the requested birth. If this last rule is disregarded the offended god may visit another misfortune on the family; and so, even in a nuclear family, a man will try to discharge his obligation to the deity well before the twelve years following the birth, just in case his wife should happen to be pregnant again during the festivals of that final year. A further rule (*d*) is that if a man has promised the hair of his child to a deity, and if he waits for several years to make good his promise, then he must at the same time

234 778 (793) pasture on neighboring slopes, and processes milk into clarified butter. This, as the sacred clarified butter of the Badagas, is used in lamps within the dairy-temple and for ritual at Badaga festivals or temples. Any Badaga male may visit the Bergani dairy-temple and (237) (372) drink buttermilk given to him by the priest. Because women are polluting, no woman may enter the dairy-temple complex itself. However, (262) women of nearby Bergani hamlet come daily to an established point at (562) (783) an uncontaminating distance from the dairy-temple and there receive buttermilk for household consumption. Buttermilk from processed sacred milk is also drunk by the priest. The priest never eats meat 793 while in office and cooks his own vegetarian food. All grains, vege- (262) (431) tables, and other foodstuffs needed by him are supplied by visitors or neighboring Bergani Badagas.

796 (788) The festival honoring Masthi Hethai takes place on a Monday in mid-January. Badaga males from all over the Hilgiris come with their Hethai sticks to worship the goddess (Plate III, B). Women may also (562) attend, but must remain an uncontaminating distance away from sacred (293) places. Men and women wear new white clothing, must not bring any- (262) thing made with leather, and eat no meat during the festival. At the (784) festival's climax, two entranced priests believed to be possessed by Masthi Hethai predict crop yields in the coming main crop season (793) (karbokam) and inform a few men that their wives will shortly conceive. (241) (842) Daily and festival rituals at Bergani are thus parts of a fertility cult related to the Badaga's economy and future prosperity.

234 361 Badaga hundis. The Badagas have for a long time used seasonal

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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539 which may be freely translated thus:—'This is the death of Śevani (a Baḍaga female). In memory of her, Jannige the she-calf of the buffalo Bannige is given in donation to atone for her sins. She goes now in a car from this mortal world to the great world (heaven). All the one hundred sins committed by the ancestors of this person, committed by the ancestors of the ancestors of this person, all the sins committed by this person herself, *viz.*, not giving of cooked rice as food to the son in distress, the not giving of fire to the neighbour, the sin of having pointed out the wilderness, and so led into difficulty the son who wanted to know the way, the sin of having ruined brothers and sisters, the sin of having taken away others' property and houses, the pouring of water on a blazing fire—may all these one hundred sins be washed away by this person coming in contact with the gold pillar[1] and by her rubbing herself against the silver pillar.[1] May the door of the house of Karma (Fate) be shut up against this person. May the door of the house of Dharma (Meritoriousness) be open to this person. May the devils and other evil beings cease their mischief to this person. May the Mîlapâla thread become tight to enable the soul of this one to walk over it and reach the heavens. May the door of the world of happiness (Sagga-Svarga) be open to this person. May this person become resplendent with beauty, by taking hold of the feet of that Brahma,[2] and by taking hold of the feet of this Basava[2]. May this one reach the holy presence of Śiva.' All say 'May it be so.—Amen'.

764 Let us suppose that the burial-ground is reached, and that the Baḍaga in the case before us belongs to a caste that is accustomed to bury its dead. The eldest of the agnatic kindred fixes a crowbar on the south side of the corpse. All the other Baḍagas now join him in digging a big oblong pit to contain the dead body. The body is then taken round this pit and is placed in it with its face turned (824) towards the north. Four twigs of the Apâmârga (Tamil Nâyuruvi—*Achyranthes aspera*) are planted at the four corners of this oblong (237) pit. A lighted lamp made of cowdung and filled with oil is placed (312) beside the head of the corpse and threads are passed diagonally

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(775) [1] Gold and silver pillars are supposed to exist in the other world and the soul of the dead by coming in contact with these is believed to wash away all its sins.

(776) [2] Gods in whom the Baḍagas believe in this world. Basava is regularly worshipped. Śiva is the highest god in their mythology and through the worship of Brahma and Basava they reach him in the end.

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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764 over the four twigs. The eldest relation now descends into the pit and performs his last act of worship to the dead body by lighting (237) (or rather throwing into the fire) perfumes. This ceremony is (372) called *Mîlapâla*—the passing of the thread (of the manes over the dead man.) Several petty things are then placed in the grave. First of all a *Liûga*, which is supposed to give to the dead eternal felicity in the other world. Then come a small gold coin called *Virarâyapaṇa* of the old Maisûr mint, a milking vessel a bambu measure, rice and other condiments, a stick with a silver knob, an umbrella and a new basket are also placed in the grave. These are supposed to be of service to the departed individual in the other world. Whatever may be omitted, the *Liûga* and the *Virarâyapaṇa*, the bambu measure and the milking vessel (*Hoṇe*) must always be placed in the grave. Even the poorest Baḍaga must not grudge these to his dead relation.

After all these arrangements are completed and the dead body is thus provided with what it needs for its journey to the other world all stand round the grave and the eldest son, or the nearest agnatic kinsman if there is not a son, takes three handfuls of earth and pronounces the following *mantra* or incantation :—

Jatige śêru jnnage śêru
Hetta hettappane śêru
Mutta muttappnê śêru :

'Mix on with your class, mix on with your people, mix on with your forefathers and mix on with the forefathers of your forefathers' All pronounce this and throw down three handfuls of earth each. The meaning is plain ; the soul of the departed is requested to join the souls of the forefathers of the family who have already departed from this life. Then the grave is covered up. In thus covering up the grave the earth must not be passed between the two legs of the person who throws it in. Then five small stones are placed over the closed grave, one at each of the four corners and one in the middle. The spade which was used in digging the grave is stuck to its handle in a reversed position and is dragged from south to north and cast away. All the men then proceed to the river, bathe, and return to their homes by dark. When they return home a lamp 778 is lighted and is worshipped by every one of these persons. It may 787 here be mentioned incidentally that the worship of lighted lamps is (354) a characteristic feature of the Baḍaga religion. In every house the lighted lamp is worshipped, and it is a belief among them that if a light dies out of itself in a house every kind of prosperity will